

IN THE CLAIMS:

Please amend the claims as indicated below.

1. (Currently Amended) A computer-based method for processing a
5 transaction, comprising:

determining a purchase price for said transaction, said purchase price
including a fractional cost that exceeds a whole-unit amount;

obtaining a buyer-provided offset value from an item associated with said
buyer;

10 obtaining a seller random number;

combining said seller ~~generating a random number and based on~~ said
buyer-provided offset value to obtain a result; and

rounding said purchase price up or down to a whole-unit amount based on
said result ~~random number~~, wherein said rounding is performed by said computer.

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2. (Currently Amended) The method of claim 1, wherein said combining
~~step of generating a random number~~ is performed by a third party to said transaction.

3. (Currently Amended) The method of claim 1, wherein said combining
20 ~~step of generating a random number~~ is supervised by a third party to said transaction.

4. (Currently Amended) The method of claim 1, wherein a buyer
commitment to the transaction is obtained ~~said step of generating a random number~~
~~further comprises the step of obtaining a seller generated increment value.~~

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5. (Cancelled)

6. (Currently Amended) The method of claim ~~4~~ 1, wherein said a buyer
commitment to the transaction is obtained by means of currency submitted to a vending
30 machine.

7. (Currently Amended) The method of claim 4 ~~1~~, wherein said a buyer commitment to the transaction is obtained by means of currency submitted to a trusted third party prior to said combining step ~~the generation of said random number~~.

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8. (Currently Amended) The method of claim 1 ~~5~~, wherein said buyer-provided offset value is specified by the buyer in response to a query.

9. (Currently Amended) The method of claim 1 ~~5~~, wherein said buyer-provided offset value is generated from a serial number obtained from paper currency provided by the buyer.

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10. (Currently Amended) The method of claim 1 ~~5~~, wherein said buyer-provided offset value is generated from a numeric identifier obtained from a product associated with said transaction.

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11. (Currently Amended) The method of claim 1 ~~5~~, wherein the seller-generated random number is made without access to said buyer-provided offset value.

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12. (Currently Amended) A computer-based method for processing a transaction, comprising:

determining a purchase price, N.C, for said transaction, said purchase price including a fractional cost equal to C/100, that exceeds a whole-unit amount, N;

obtaining a buyer-provided offset value from an item associated with said buyer;

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obtaining a seller random number;

combining said seller ~~generating a random number and based on~~ said buyer-provided offset value to obtain a result; and

rounding said purchase price up to a price of N+1 units with a probability of p and down to a price of N units with a probability of (1-p), wherein probability p

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equals $C/100$ and wherein said rounding is based on said result ~~generated random number~~ and is performed by said computer.

13. (Currently Amended) The method of claim 12, wherein said
5 combining step of generating a random number is performed in a manner that prevents a bias towards a buyer or seller.

14. (Original) The method of claim 12, further comprising the step of obtaining a buyer commitment to the transaction.

10 15. (Currently Amended) A computer-based method for processing a transaction, comprising:

determining a purchase price, $N.C$, for said transaction, said purchase price including a fractional cost equal to $C/100$, that exceeds a whole-unit amount, N ;

15 receiving an amount of X units from a buyer, where X is greater than N ;
obtaining a buyer-provided offset value from an item associated with said buyer;

obtaining a seller random number;

20 combining said seller generating a random number and based on said buyer-provided offset value to obtain a result; and

rounding said purchase price up to a price of X units with a probability of $((N + p) / X)$ and down to a price of zero units with a probability of $1 - ((N + p) / X)$, wherein probability p equals $C/100$, and wherein said rounding is based on said result ~~generated random number~~ and is performed by said computer.

25 16. (Currently Amended) The method of claim 15, wherein said combining step of generating a random number is performed in a manner that prevents a bias towards a buyer or seller.

30 17. (Original) The method of claim 15, further comprising the step of

obtaining a buyer commitment to the transaction.

18. (Currently Amended) A system for processing a transaction, comprising:

- 5 a memory that stores computer-readable code; and
 a processor operatively coupled to said memory, said processor configured to implement said computer-readable code, said computer-readable code configured to:
 determine a purchase price for said transaction, said purchase price including a fractional cost that exceeds a whole-unit amount;
 10 obtain a buyer-provided offset value from an item associated with said buyer;
obtain a seller random number;
combine said seller ~~generate a random number and based on~~ said buyer-provided offset value to obtain a result; and
 15 round said purchase price up or down to a whole-unit amount based on said result ~~random number~~.

19. (Currently Amended) The system of claim 18, wherein said random number and said buyer-provided offset value are combined ~~is generated~~ in a manner that
 20 prevents a bias towards a buyer or seller.

20. (Original) The system of claim 18, wherein said processor is further configured to obtain a buyer commitment to the transaction.

21. (Previously Presented) The system of claim 18, wherein said purchase price, $N.C$, for said transaction includes a fractional cost equal to $C/100$, that exceeds a whole-unit amount, N , and said purchase price is rounded up to a price of $N+1$ units with a probability of p and rounded down to a price of N units with a probability of $(1-p)$, wherein probability p equals $C/100$.

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22. (Previously Presented) The system of claim 18, wherein said purchase price, N.C, for said transaction includes a fractional cost equal to $C/100$, that exceeds a whole-unit amount, N and wherein an amount of X units is received from a buyer, where X is greater than N, and wherein said purchase price is rounded up to a price of X units with a probability of $((N + p) / X)$ and rounded down to a price of zero units with a probability of $1 - ((N + p) / X)$, wherein probability p equals $C/100$.

23. (Currently Amended) An article of manufacture for processing a transaction, comprising:

10 a computer readable medium having computer readable code means embodied thereon, said computer readable program code means comprising:

a step to determine a purchase price for said transaction, said purchase price including a fractional cost that exceeds a whole-unit amount;

15 a step to obtain a buyer-provided offset value from an item associated with said buyer;

a step to obtain a seller random number;

a step to combine said seller ~~generate~~ a random number and based on said buyer-provided offset value to obtain a result; and

20 a step to round said purchase price up or down to a whole-unit amount based on said result ~~random number~~.